

Historic American Buildings Survey of Heber City's Town Square Conducted

In recent weeks the four buildings on the Heber City town square have been measured, photographed, drawn and researched so that they may become part of the records of the Historic American Buildings Survey in the Library of Congress. This is part of a summer project jointly sponsored by the National Park Service and the Utah Heritage Foundation. Materials from HABS files are available for reproduction for students, authors and publishers of architectural and historical material. Because the Heber City buildings are individually interesting and compose a unique group in a handsome park, they have been given high priority among the sites to be surveyed in Utah this summer.

ACCOMPANYING EACH set of measured drawings and photographs will be a history of the structure. Documentary sources are seldom complete and the members of the survey team have a number of questions about the Heber City buildings for which readers of the Wasatch Wave may be able to provide answers. A number of these questions are suggested by old photographs; others come from clues provided in the buildings themselves.

For example, the interior plan and stair in the courthouse were different before the additions in 1924. What was the original arrangement?

WHEN WAS THE JAIL constructed? Were the cells once as high-ceilinged as the roof or has there always been a loft above.

What was the original arrangement of rooms occupying the stage end of the tabernacle? How were the stairs located which served the old horseshoe-shaped gallery? With what colors or special effects was the interior decorated?

Old photographs of the courthouse, jail and tabernacle show chimneys which no longer exist. Where were stoves located or what were the heating arrangements?

DOCUMENTS DISAGREE about the sequence of construction at the social hall. Were the two major wings built at the same time or was the west wing a later addition? When was the kitchen added? What was the original arrangement of the stage and balcony ends? Old pictures show a more elaborate front. When and why was this simplified?

What significant events and individuals are associated with each building? Builders and designers are important to the survey but so are speakers in the tabernacle, judges and trials in the courthouse, celebrations in the social hall and prisoners in the jail.

ANY OF THIS INFORMATION can be brought to the attention of the survey team thru the office of the Wasatch Wave.

While HABS photographs and drawings provide a record of buildings which have been destroyed, the survey is more interested in the maintenance and preservation of America's architectural heritage. The supervisor of this summer's project describes some of this philosophy in these terms:

"Architectural values are human values and the worth of buildings can be measured in their human associations. There is an adolescent mentality which despises age in anybody or anything, but to destroy a building because its designer lived before the era of air-conditioning is comparable to burning the works of Shakespeare because he wrote before the era of television. Completely new cities and subdivisions usually have the monotonous sameness and short-lived interest of teen fads.

"WELL-CONSTRUCTED and useful buildings, when properly maintained, can serve for centuries. They represent mature values in society and set high standards for future construction. Their association with past generations and historic events provides rich texture to the community fabric."

Members of the survey team are a project supervisor: Paul

Goeldner, AIA, an architect on leave from the faculty at Texas Technological College to obtain a doctorate at Columbia University; a researcher and assistant project supervisor: John L. Giusti, AIA, an architect and faculty member at the University of Utah; four student assistant architects: Charles W. Barrow and Robert M. Swanson of the University of Texas and Kenneth Lamber and Keith Sorenson of the University of Utah; and a photographer: Kent Fairbanks of the University of Utah.

SOME OF THE OTHER projects to be recorded in Utah this summer are the Seventh Ward Chapel, the Fremont School and the ZCMI store front in Salt Lake City; schools in Fairfield and Fillmore; stage stops at Hampton's Ford and Kimball's Junction; the Lorenzo Snow House in Brigham City; and the Methodist Church in Corinne.

HABS has ten other summer projects this year in local areas from Massachusetts to Hawaii.

The Historic American Buildings Survey serves only to study, measure, photograph and record the great buildings of America. It does not directly involve itself in their retention or restoration, although the reports may generate local appreciation and action.

HOWEVER, PRIOR TO this Historic American Buildings Survey in Utah this summer, nationally recognized historians, architects and tourism officials have strong recommended the development of the entire town square as a park and historic site, retaining all of the buildings of this, the last Mormon pioneer town square. They note that in addition to the historic and architectural values and the cultural and recreational facilities of the Tabernacle and Social Hall, that the original section of the Courthouse, standing alone, would ideally serve as a tourist information center and interpretive museum, showing how people lived and worked in a pioneer town of 19th Century Mormon America.

THESE AUTHORITIES consider that Heber has an outstanding opportunity to develop a great economic asset in its unique town square pioneer buildings and beautiful grounds — by developing exciting presentations of drama, music, dance, crafts, art and educational exhibits. The exhibits were considered to be most effective when prepared with life-size models and using authentic furnishings and equipment, showing brick-making, butter-churning, rug weaving, family socials in the parlour and so on.

SUCH PRESENTATIONS at Colonial Williamsburg, Old Salem, Historic Nauvoo and Salt Lake's Pioneer Village draw thousands of interested tourists each year. These authorities also consider that the grounds can be developed as an active recreational park for the community and visitor alike, making this one of the truly great tourist attractions of western America.

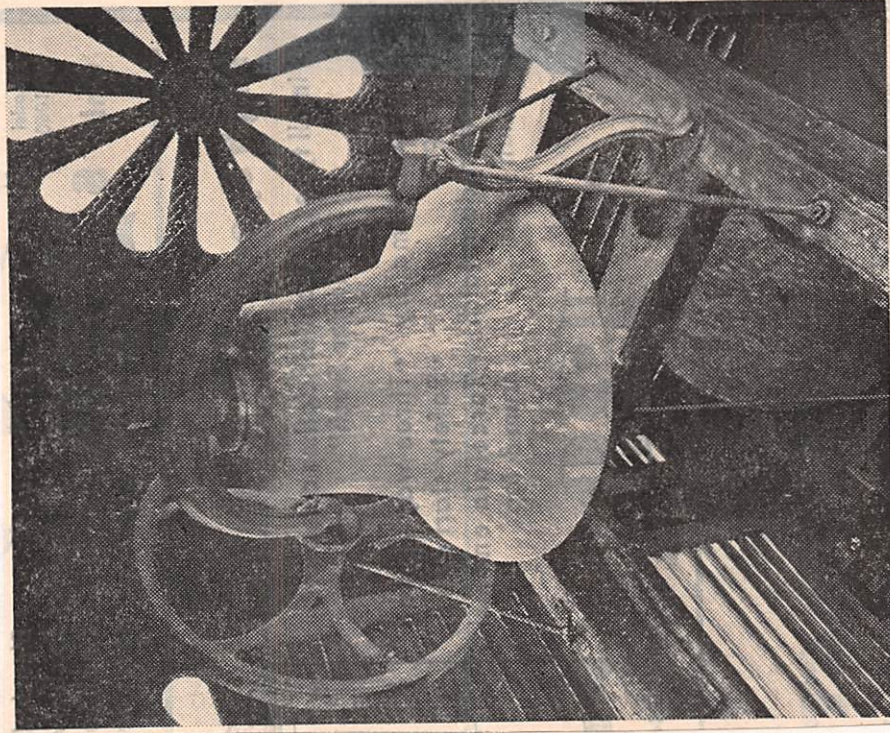
Local officials have not considered such proposals to have sufficient merit to warrant a study of the costs, resources and opportunities involved in this approach to building the economy of the valley.

Cataprep
Enhance
this
Chronology
Remodeling
Story

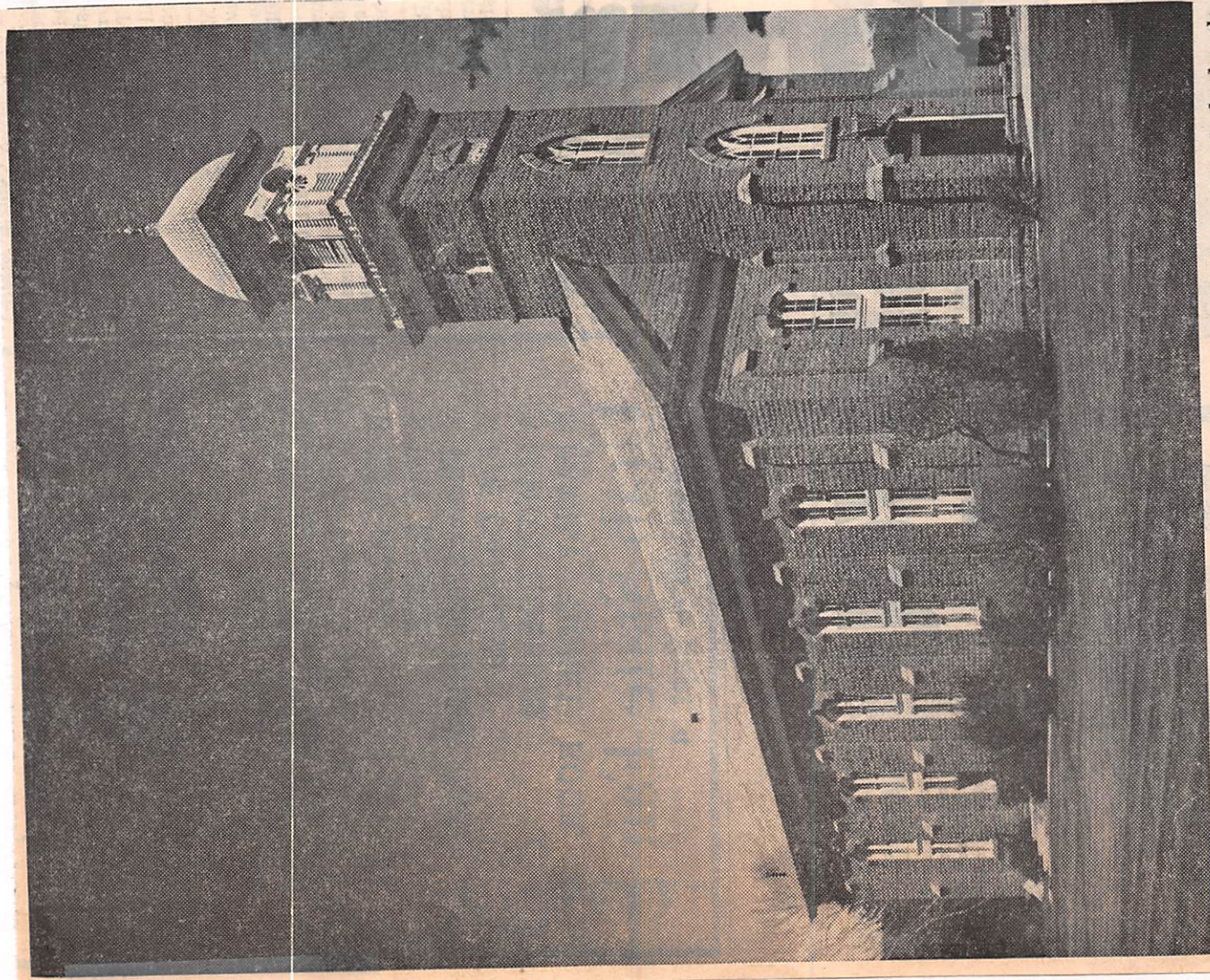
Historical

Heber Tabernacle

1C Wasatch Wave Heber City, UT 84033 Thursday, May 27, 1982
The Summit County Bee Coalville, UT 84017 Friday, May 28, 1982



ORIGINAL BELL— Bell in Tabernacle tower called many generations to church services, told of fire, and sounded the curfew.



HEBER TABERNACLE— The stately Tabernacle is Heber Valley's famed landmark.